

letters

and nuclear power sources. The wider our options for energy sources, the better able we will be to protect the environment.

CLARENCE ZENER
Carnegie-Mellon University

Protestors vs Jason

Your October issue (page 62) contained an article entitled "Protesters Harass Jason Physicists." While accurately portraying the "harassment" to which Jason members were subjected, this article does not explain *why* they were "harassed." The reason, however, is simple: the Jason division, in at least two known cases, has played an inventive and active role in advising the Pentagon in its conduct of the Vietnam war and in its investigation of counter-insurgency techniques (see for example, "Pentagon Papers," Gravel Edition, Volume IV, page 115; "Hearings before the Electronic Battlefield Subcommittee of the Preparedness Investigation Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate," page 4; "The Student Mobilizer," Volume 3, no 4, April 2, 1970; "New York Review of Books," 19 November 1970).

Those who have "harassed" Jason physicists have sometimes been accused of disseminating "lies." If there has been any misrepresentation of the details of Jason activity by protest groups, we strongly urge Jason members to correct such misrepresentation by making public all their research. One should also recall that before the publication of the "Pentagon Papers" some Jason members, when questioned, would not even admit that Jason had worked on Vietnam. Likewise, it is quite possible that Jason is only the visible part of a larger iceberg: it is likely that many other scientists have collaborated on the war in Vietnam but that their activity has not yet been revealed to the public.

At the same time that some Jason members have called the "allegations" of protesters "lies," they have also felt it necessary to defend themselves further. Note that self-defense has never been necessary for such Jason members as John Wheeler or Eugene Wigner, both of whom are confident in the justice of American policy and proud of the role they have played in forming it and in facilitating its implementation. They, at least, are consistent. But many Jason members (for example Freeman Dyson, Murray Gell-Mann, Sidney Drell, etc...) have advanced one or another of the following arguments:

▶ their participation in Jason should

not be condemned, because most of Jason activity, and/or their own work in Jason, is unrelated to the war in Vietnam but deals with such projects as studies in support of the SALT agreement.

▶ their participation in Jason should not be condemned because they were, "as citizens," outspoken opponents of the war.

▶ their participation in Jason should not be condemned because they were opposed to the war and hoped, from within Jason, to influence American policy.

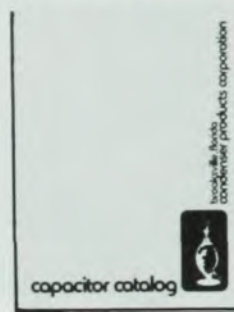
Before showing why these arguments are, in our opinion, irrelevant, we would like to point out that Jason members defending themselves on Vietnam usually sound as abstract and as technical as if they were discussing a scientific question; they never even mention what seems to us the essential aspect, namely the suffering and death of Vietnamese men and women; the electronic anti-infiltration barrier recommended by Jason was to consist among other things of "10 000 SA-DEYE-BLU-26B [antipersonnel pellet bombs] per month."¹

With respect to the first argument: We do not think that the American government has opposite policies, a good one about the nuclear disarmament and a bad one about Vietnam; for us, they are not contradictory. It is difficult to see in what way Jason's role in reaching the SALT agreement is an answer to the question of the responsibility of Jason in the war in Vietnam. Assuming for the moment that the SALT agreement is commendable, of what use has the limitation of nuclear weapons been for the Vietnamese upon which practically every other weapon in the US arsenal has been used?

With respect to the second argument: The opinions that Jason members held or now hold about the war in Vietnam seem rather irrelevant in the following context. In 1966 Jason was asked by the Pentagon to study "technical possibilities in relation to our military operations in Vietnam."² Jason did not respond by urging the Pentagon to stop "military operations" but recommended instead the construction of the electronic anti-infiltration barrier.

With respect to the third argument: A simple question is in order. Do those who hoped to influence American policy from within believe that they succeeded? Do they feel that the Indochinese people should be grateful to them that it was only "7 550 800 tons of bombs, rockets, missiles, etc... (that) were dropped by US aviation on Indochina between February 1965 and August 1972?"³ Or that it was only "one out every 35 inhabitants of Indochina who has been killed, one out of every

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15 wounded, one out of every 6 made a refugee?"⁴ The horrifying extent of the destruction of Indochina would seem to indicate that attempts to "influence" the Pentagon from "inside" were ineffective. Acknowledging this, why did not those who claim that they were against the war resign from Jason? Or why did they not follow Daniel Ellsberg's example and make public the "Jason Papers?" The attitude of those Jason members who, as one of them put it, believe that they have "helped to strengthen the voice of sanity inside the American government" is reminiscent of a standard *a posteriori* argument put forward by people who have collaborated with an oppressive regime in order "to save what little could be saved"; for instance, after World War II, some French collaborators of the Nazis tried to justify themselves by stressing that they had helped save some Jews.

Far from influencing Pentagon policy makers, Jason physicists have, consciously or not, been used by them; they have put their competence at the service of a policy that, in order to maintain the US domination over Third World countries has gone, in South East Asia, as far as a war of genocide. Some groups of scientists (among them, in the US, Science for Vietnam, SESPA, MAG, NARMIC, etc.) make another choice: they work against the "military-industrial-complex" from "outside."

References

1. "Pentagon Papers," Gravel Edition, Vol. IV, page 122.
2. Ref 1, page 115.
3. "International Herald Tribune," 5 September 1972.
4. E. W. P. Pfeiffer, press conference in Paris, June 1972.

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JASON MEMBERS COMMENT: The letter of Marcello Cini and others is a more reasoned criticism of Jason activities than we have recently seen, and deserves a reasoned answer. I speak only for myself and not for any other Jason members. My name came into public view on a nonsecret list of titles of documents, where I appeared as one of the authors of a paper entitled "Use of

Tactical Nuclear Weapons in South-East Asia," or words to that effect. It is true that I helped write this paper under Jason auspices, and it is possible that it may have had some slight influence upon US policy in Vietnam. The question is whether I am to feel ashamed or proud of what I have done. I am glad to state publicly that I am proud of it. If my work had no effect on government policy, I can have done no great harm. If my work had some effect, I can be proud to have helped to avert a human tragedy far greater even than the one we have witnessed.

FREEMAN J. DYSON
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I do not understand how the authors of the letter above can possibly know my views on the relationship of a scientist to his government, the Vietnam conflict, SALT, or anything else, because colleagues of yours demanded of me that I denounce the US and its policy as well as my supposed participation *before* being permitted to lecture. Furthermore, not only were my offers to arrange a discussion of the above issues following my scheduled physics lectures flatly rejected by my confronters, but they insisted that I accept their political inquisition and *give responses that would satisfy them as a precondition* to lecturing. I refused and was therefore not permitted to lecture.

In general I am quite willing to discuss freely my views on the existence of Jason and the relationship between a scientist and his government and society—and I have done so on a number of occasions. In fact, shortly after the disruptions mentioned above, I participated in a general discussion of these issues at CERN at which time I advanced *none* of the three arguments in defense of Jason that were stated in the letter above.

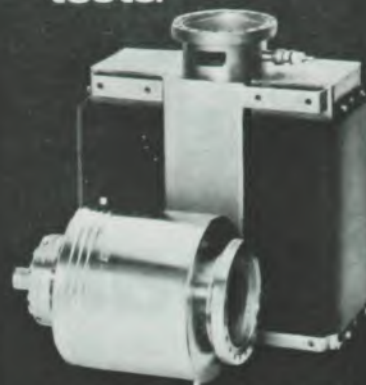
I consider attempts by small groups to demand political and moral purification as conditions for scientific dialogue to be dangerous precedents and not mere "harassments" as defended and rationalized in the letter above.

SIDNEY D. DRELL
Stanford Linear Accelerator Center

Developing countries

Michael Moravcsik has got to the root cause of the plight of physics (and physicists) in the developing countries by pointing out the lack of adequately trained manpower and its scientific isolation from the rest of the world (September, page 40). His suggestions, if implemented, would go a long way towards alleviating these problems. The suggestion which, as Mor-

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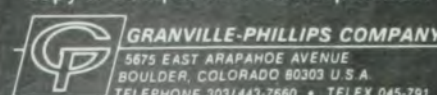


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